

VIII

MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA¹

(1917)

Now that dreams have proved of service to us as the normal prototypes of narcissistic mental disorders, we propose to try whether a comparison with the normal emotion of grief, and its expression in mourning, will not throw some light on the nature of melancholia. This time, however, we must make a certain prefatory warning against too great expectations of the result. Even in descriptive psychiatry the definition of melancholia is uncertain; it takes on various clinical forms (some of them suggesting somatic rather than psychogenic affections) that do not seem definitely to warrant reduction to a unity. Apart from those impressions which every observer may gather, our material here is limited to a small number of cases the psychogenic nature of which was indisputable. Any claim to general validity for our conclusions shall be forgone at the outset, therefore, and we will console ourselves by reflecting that, with the means of investigation at our disposal to-day, we could hardly discover anything that was not typical, at least of a small group if not of a whole class of disorders.

A correlation of melancholia and mourning seems justified by the general picture of the two conditions.² Moreover, wherever it is possible to discern the external influences in life which have brought each of them about, this exciting cause proves to be the same in

¹ First published in *Zeitschrift*, Bd. IV., 1916-18; reprinted in *Sammlung*, Vierte Folge. [Translated by Joan Riviere.]

² Abraham, to whom we owe the most important of the few analytic studies on this subject, also took this comparison as his starting-point. (*Zentralblatt*, Bd. II., 1912.)

both. Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as fatherland, liberty, an ideal, and so on. As an effect of the same influences, melancholia instead of a state of grief develops in some people, whom we consequently suspect of a morbid pathological disposition. It is also well worth notice that, although grief involves grave departures from the normal attitude to life, it never occurs to us to regard it as a morbid condition and hand the mourner over to medical treatment. We rest assured that after a lapse of time it will be overcome, and we look upon any interference with it as inadvisable or even harmful.

The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, abrogation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment. This picture becomes a little more intelligible when we consider that, with one exception, the same traits are met with in grief. The fall in self-esteem is absent in grief; but otherwise the features are the same. Profound mourning, the reaction to the loss of a loved person, contains the same feeling of pain, loss of interest in the outside world—in so far as it does not recall the dead one—loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love, which would mean a replacing of the one mourned, the same turning from every active effort that is not connected with thoughts of the dead. It is easy to see that this inhibition and circumscription in the ego is the expression of an exclusive devotion to its mourning, which leaves nothing over for other purposes or other interests. It is really only because we know so well how to explain it that this attitude does not seem to us pathological.

We should regard it as a just comparison, too, to

call the temper of grief 'painful'. The justification for this comparison will probably prove illuminating when we are in a position to define pain in terms of the economics of the mind.¹

Now in what consists the work which mourning performs? I do not think there is anything far-fetched in the following representation of it. The testing of reality, having shown that the loved object no longer exists, requires forthwith that all the libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to this object. Against this demand a struggle of course arises—it may be universally observed that man never willingly abandons a libido-position, not even when a substitute is already beckoning to him. This struggle can be so intense that a turning away from reality ensues, the object being clung to through the medium of a hallucinatory wish-psychois.² The normal outcome is that deference for reality gains the day. Nevertheless its behest cannot be at once obeyed. The task is now carried through bit by bit, under great expense of time and cathectic energy, while all the time the existence of the lost object is continued in the mind. Each single one of the memories and hopes which bound the libido to the object is brought up and hyper-catheted, and the detachment of the libido from it accomplished. Why this process of carrying out the behest of reality bit by bit, which is in the nature of a compromise, should be so extraordinarily painful is not at all easy to explain in terms of mental economics. It is worth noting that this pain³ seems natural to us. The fact is, however, that when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again.

Now let us apply to melancholia what we have

¹ [The words 'painful' and 'pain' in this paragraph represent the German *Schmerz* (i.e. the ordinary connotation of *pain* in English) and not *Unlust*, the mental antithesis of pleasure, also technically translated 'pain'.—TRANS.]

² Cf. the preceding paper.

³ [Cf. first footnote on this page. The German here is *Schmerz-unlust*, a combination of the two words for *pain*.—TRANS.]

learnt about grief. In one class of cases it is evident that melancholia too may be the reaction to the loss of a loved object; where this is not the exciting cause one can perceive that there is a loss of a more ideal kind. The object has not perhaps actually died, but has become lost as an object of love (e.g. the case of a deserted bride). In yet other cases one feels justified in concluding that a loss of the kind has been experienced, but one cannot see clearly what has been lost, and may the more readily suppose that the patient too cannot consciously perceive what it is he has lost. This, indeed, might be so even when the patient was aware of the loss giving rise to the melancholia, that is, when he knows whom he has lost but not *what* it is he has lost in them. This would suggest that melancholia is in some way related to an unconscious loss of a love-object, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing unconscious about the loss.

In grief we found that the ego's inhibited condition and loss of interest was fully accounted for by the absorbing work of mourning. The unknown loss in melancholia would also result in an inner labour of the same kind and hence would be responsible for the melancholic inhibition. Only, the inhibition of the melancholiac seems puzzling to us because we cannot see what it is that absorbs him so entirely. Now the melancholiac displays something else which is lacking in grief—an extraordinary fall in his self-esteem, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale. In grief the world becomes poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself. The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any effort and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and chastised. He abases himself before everyone and commiserates his own relatives for being connected with someone so unworthy. He does not realize that any change has taken place in him, but extends his self-criticism back over the past and declares that he was never any better. This picture of

delusional belittling—which is predominantly moral—is completed by sleeplessness and refusal of nourishment, and by an overthrow, psychologically very remarkable, of that instinct which constrains every living thing to cling to life.

Both scientifically and therapeutically it would be fruitless to contradict the patient who brings these accusations against himself. He must surely be right in some way and be describing something that corresponds to what he thinks. Some of his statements, indeed, we are at once obliged to confirm without reservation. He really is as lacking in interest, as incapable of love and of any achievement as he says. But that, as we know, is secondary, the effect of the inner travail consuming his ego, of which we know nothing but which we compare with the work of mourning. In certain other self-accusations he also seems to us justified, only that he has a keener eye for the truth than others who are not melancholic. When in his exacerbation of self-criticism he describes himself as petty, egoistic, dishonest, lacking in independence, one whose sole aim has been to hide the weaknesses of his own nature, for all we know it may be that he has come very near to self-knowledge; we only wonder why a man must become ill before he can discover truth of this kind. For there can be no doubt that whoever holds and expresses to others such an opinion of himself—one that Hamlet harboured of himself and all men¹—that man is ill, whether he speaks the truth or is more or less unfair to himself. Nor is it difficult to see that there is no correspondence, so far as we can judge, between the degree of self-abasement and its real justification. A good, capable, conscientious woman will speak no better of herself after she develops melancholia than one who is actually worthless; indeed, the first is more likely to fall ill of the disease than the other, of whom we too should have nothing

¹ 'Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?' (Act II. Sc. 2).

good to say. Finally, it must strike us that after all the melancholiac's behaviour is not in every way the same as that of one who is normally devoured by remorse and self-reproach. Shame before others, which would characterize this condition above everything, is lacking in him, or at least there is little sign of it. One could almost say that the opposite trait of insistent talking about himself and pleasure in the consequent exposure of himself predominates in the melancholiac.

The essential thing, therefore, is not whether the melancholiac's distressing self-abasement is justified in the opinion of others. The point must be rather that he is correctly describing his psychological situation in his lamentations. He has lost his self-respect and must have some good reason for having done so. It is true that we are then faced with a contradiction which presents a very difficult problem. From the analogy with grief we should have to conclude that the loss suffered by the melancholiac is that of an object; according to what he says the loss is one in himself.

Before going into this contradiction, let us dwell for a moment on the view melancholia affords of the constitution of the ego. We see how in this condition one part of the ego sets itself over against the other; judges it critically, and, as it were, looks upon it as an object. Our suspicion that the critical institution in the mind which is here split off from the ego might also demonstrate its independence in other circumstances will be confirmed by all further observations. We shall really find justification for distinguishing this institution from the rest of the ego. It is the mental faculty commonly called conscience that we are thus recognizing; we shall count it, along with the censorship of consciousness and the testing of reality, among the great institutions of the ego and shall also find evidence elsewhere showing that it can become diseased independently. In the clinical picture of melancholia dissatisfaction with the self on moral grounds is far the most outstanding feature; the self-criticism much

less frequently concerns itself with bodily infirmity, ugliness, weakness, social inferiority; among these latter ills that the patient dreads or asseverates the thought of poverty alone has a favoured position.

There is one observation, not at all difficult to make, which supplies an explanation of the contradiction mentioned above. If one listens patiently to the many and various self-accusations of the melancholiac, one cannot in the end avoid the impression that often the most violent of them are hardly at all applicable to the patient himself, but that with insignificant modifications they do fit someone else, some person whom the patient loves, has loved or ought to love. This conjecture is confirmed every time one examines the facts. So we get the key to the clinical picture—by perceiving that the self-reproaches are reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted on to the patient's own ego.

The woman who loudly pities her husband for being bound to such a poor creature as herself is really accusing her husband of being a poor creature in some sense or other. There is no need to be greatly surprised that among those transferred from him some genuine self-reproaches are mingled: they are allowed to obtrude themselves since they help to mask the others and make recognition of the true state of affairs impossible; indeed, they derive from the 'for' and 'against' contained in the conflict that has led to the loss of the loved object. The behaviour of the patients too becomes now much more comprehensible. Their complaints are really 'plaints' in the legal sense of the word; it is because everything derogatory that they say of themselves at bottom relates to someone else that they are not ashamed and do not hide their heads. Moreover, they are far from evincing towards those around them the attitude of humility and submission that alone would befit such worthless persons; on the contrary, they give a great deal of trouble, perpetually taking offence and behaving as if they had

been treated with great injustice. All this is possible only because the reactions expressed in their behaviour still proceed from an attitude of revolt, a mental constellation which by a certain process has become transformed into melancholic contrition.

Once this is recognized there is no difficulty in reconstructing this process. First there existed an object-choice, the libido had attached itself to a certain person; then, owing to a real injury or disappointment concerned with the loved person, this object-relationship was undermined. The result was not the normal one of withdrawal of the libido from this object and transference of it to a new one, but something different for which various conditions seem to be necessary. The object-cathexis proved to have little power of resistance, and was abandoned; but the free libido was withdrawn into the ego and not directed to another object. It did not find application there, however, in any one of several possible ways, but served simply to establish an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, so that the latter could henceforth be criticized by a special mental faculty like an object, like the forsaken object. In this way the loss of the object became transformed into a loss in the ego, and the conflict between the ego and the loved person transformed into a cleavage between the criticizing faculty of the ego and the ego as altered by the identification.

Certain things may be directly inferred with regard to the necessary conditions and effects of such a process. On the one hand, a strong fixation to the love-object must have been present; on the other hand, in contradiction to this, the object-cathexis can have had little power of resistance. As Otto Rank has aptly remarked, this contradiction seems to imply that the object-choice had been effected on a narcissistic basis, so that when obstacles arise in the way of the object-cathexis it can regress into narcissism.

The narcissistic identification with the object then becomes a substitute for the erotic cathexis, the result of which is that in spite of the conflict with the loved person the love-relation need not be given up. This kind of substitution of identification for object-love is an important mechanism in the narcissistic affections; Karl Landauer has lately been able to point to it in the process of recovery in schizophrenia.¹ It of course represents a regression from one type of object-choice to the primal narcissism. We have elsewhere described how object-choice develops from a preliminary stage of identification, the way in which the ego first adopts an object and the ambivalence in which this is expressed. The ego wishes to incorporate this object into itself, and the method by which it would do so, in this oral or cannibalistic stage, is by devouring it. Abraham is undoubtedly right in referring to this connection the refusal of nourishment met with in severe forms of melancholia.

The conclusion which our theory would require, namely, that the disposition to succumb to melancholia—or some part of it—lies in the narcissistic type of object-choice, unfortunately still lacks confirmation by investigation. In the opening remarks of this paper I admitted that the empirical material upon which this study is founded does not supply all we could wish. On the assumption that the results of observation would accord with our inferences, we should not hesitate to include among the special characteristics of melancholia a regression from object-cathexis to the still narcissistic oral phase of the libido. Identifications with the object are by no means rare in the transference-neuroses too; indeed, they are a well-known mechanism in symptom-formation, especially in hysteria. The difference, however, between narcissistic and hysterical identification may be perceived in the object-cathexis, which in the first is relinquished, whereas in the latter it persists and

¹ *Zeitschrift*, Bd. II., 1914.

exercises an influence, usually confined to certain isolated actions and innervations. Nevertheless, even in the transference-neuroses identification is the expression of a community which may signify love. The narcissistic identification is the older, and it paves the way to comprehension of the hysterical form, which has been less thoroughly studied.

Some of the features of melancholia, therefore, are borrowed from grief, and the others from the process of regression from narcissistic object-choice to narcissism. On the one hand, like mourning, melancholia is the reaction to a real loss of a loved object; but, over and above this, it is bound to a condition which is absent in normal grief or which, if it supervenes, transforms the latter into a pathological variety. The loss of a love-object constitutes an excellent opportunity for the ambivalence in love-relationships to make itself felt and come to the fore. Consequently where there is a disposition to obsessional neurosis the conflict of ambivalence casts a pathological shade on the grief, forcing it to express itself in the form of self-reproaches, to the effect that the mourner himself is to blame for the loss of the loved one, *i.e.* desired it. These obsessional states of depression following upon the death of loved persons show us what the conflict of ambivalence by itself can achieve, when there is no regressive withdrawal of libido as well. The occasions giving rise to melancholia for the most part extend beyond the clear case of a loss by death, and include all those situations of being wounded, hurt, neglected, out of favour, or disappointed, which can import opposite feelings of love and hate into the relationship or reinforce an already existing ambivalence. This conflict of ambivalence, the origin of which lies now more in actual experience, now more in constitution, must not be neglected among the conditioning factors in melancholia. If the object-love, which cannot be given up, takes refuge in narcissistic identification, while the object itself is abandoned, then hate is expended upon

this new substitute-object, railing at it, depreciating it, making it suffer and deriving sadistic gratification from its suffering. The self-torments of melancholiacs, which are without doubt pleasurable, signify, just like the corresponding phenomenon in the obsessional neurosis, a gratification of sadistic tendencies and of hate,¹ both of which relate to an object and in this way have both been turned round upon the self. In both disorders the sufferers usually succeed in the end in taking revenge, by the circuitous path of self-punishment, on the original objects and in tormenting them by means of the illness, having developed the latter so as to avoid the necessity of openly expressing their hostility against the loved ones. After all, the person who has occasioned the injury to the patient's feelings, and against whom his illness is aimed, is usually to be found among those in his near neighbourhood. The melancholiac's erotic cathexis of his object thus undergoes a twofold fate: part of it regresses to identification, but the other part, under the influence of the conflict of ambivalence, is reduced to the stage of sadism, which is nearer to this conflict.

It is this sadism, and only this, that solves the riddle of the tendency to suicide which makes melancholia so interesting—and so dangerous. As the primal condition from which instinct-life proceeds we have come to recognize a self-love of the ego which is so immense, in the fear that rises up at the menace of death we see liberated a volume of narcissistic libido which is so vast, that we cannot conceive how this ego can connive at its own destruction. It is true we have long known that no neurotic harbours thoughts of suicide which are not murderous impulses against others re-directed upon himself, but we have never been able to explain what interplay of forces could carry such a purpose through to execution. Now the analysis of melancholia shows that the ego can kill

¹ For the distinction between the two, see the paper entitled 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes', p. 82.

itself only when, the object-cathexis having been withdrawn upon it, it can treat itself as an object, when it is able to launch against itself the animosity relating to an object—that primordial reaction on the part of the ego to all objects in the outer world.¹ Thus in the regression from narcissistic object-choice the object is indeed abolished, but in spite of all it proves itself stronger than the ego's self. In the two contrasting situations of intense love and of suicide the ego is overwhelmed by the object, though in totally different ways.

We may expect to find the derivation of that one striking feature of melancholia, the manifestations of dread of poverty, in anal erotism, torn out of its context and altered by regression.

Melancholia confronts us with yet other problems, the answer to which in part eludes us. The way in which it passes off after a certain time has elapsed without leaving traces of any gross change is a feature it shares with grief. It appeared that in grief this period of time is necessary for detailed carrying out of the behest imposed by the testing of reality, and that by accomplishing this labour the ego succeeds in freeing its libido from the lost object. We may imagine that the ego is occupied with some analogous task during the course of a melancholia; in neither case have we any insight into the economic processes going forward. The sleeplessness characteristic of melancholia evidently testifies to the inflexibility of the condition, the impossibility of effecting the general withdrawal of cathexes necessary for sleep. The complex of melancholia behaves like an open wound, drawing to itself cathectic energy from all sides (which we have called in the transference-neuroses 'anti-cathexes') and draining the ego until it is utterly depleted; it proves easily able to withstand the ego's wish to sleep. The amelioration in the condition that is regularly noticeable towards evening is probably due to a somatic factor and not

¹ Cf. 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes', p. 79.

explicable psychologically. These questions link up with the further one, whether a loss in the ego apart from any object (a purely narcissistic wound to the ego) would suffice to produce the clinical picture of melancholia and whether an impoverishment of ego-libido directly due to toxins would not result in certain forms of the disease.

The most remarkable peculiarity of melancholia, and one most in need of explanation, is the tendency it displays to turn into mania accompanied by a completely opposite symptomatology. Not every melancholia has this fate, as we know. Many cases run their course in intermittent periods, in the intervals of which signs of mania may be entirely absent or only very slight. Others show that regular alternation of melancholic and manic phases which has been classified as circular insanity. One would be tempted to exclude these cases from among those of psychogenic origin, if the psycho-analytic method had not succeeded in effecting an explanation and therapeutic improvement of several cases of the kind. It is not merely permissible, therefore, but incumbent upon us to extend the analytic explanation of melancholia to mania.

I cannot promise that this attempt will prove entirely satisfying; it is much more in the nature of a first sounding and hardly goes beyond that. There are two points from which one may start: the first is a psycho-analytic point of view, and the second one may probably call a matter of general observation in mental economics. The psycho-analytic point is one which several analytic investigators have already formulated in so many words, namely, that the content of mania is no different from that of melancholia, that both the disorders are wrestling with the same 'complex', and that in melancholia the ego has succumbed to it, whereas in mania it has mastered the complex or thrust it aside. The other point of view is founded on the observation that all states such as joy, triumph, exultation, which form the normal counterparts of mania,

are economically conditioned in the same way. First, there is always a long-sustained condition of great mental expenditure, or one established by long force of habit, upon which at last some influence supervenes making it superfluous, so that a volume of energy becomes available for manifold possible applications and ways of discharge,—for instance, when some poor devil, by winning a large sum of money, is suddenly relieved from perpetual anxiety about his daily bread, when any long and arduous struggle is finally crowned with success, when a man finds himself in a position to throw off at one blow some heavy burden, some false position he has long endured, and so on. All such situations are characterized by high spirits, by the signs of discharge of joyful emotion, and by increased readiness to all kinds of action, just like mania, and in complete contrast to the dejection and inhibition of melancholia. One may venture to assert that mania is nothing other than a triumph of this sort, only that here again what the ego has surmounted and is triumphing over remains hidden from it. Alcoholic intoxication, which belongs to the same group of conditions, may be explained in the same way—in so far as it consists in a state of elation; here there is probably a relaxation produced by toxins of the expenditure of energy in repression. The popular view readily takes for granted that a person in a maniacal state finds such delight in movement and action because he is so 'cheery'. This piece of false logic must of course be exploded. What has happened is that the economic condition described above has been fulfilled, and this is the reason why the maniac is in such high spirits on the one hand and is so uninhibited in action on the other.

If we put together the two suggestions reached, we have the following result. When mania supervenes, the ego must have surmounted the loss of the object (or the mourning over the loss, or perhaps the object itself), whereupon the whole amount of anti-cathexis

which the painful suffering of melancholia drew from the ego and 'bound' has become available. Besides this, the maniac plainly shows us that he has become free from the object by whom his suffering was caused, for he runs after new object-cathexes like a starving man after bread.

This explanation certainly sounds plausible, but in the first place it is too indefinite, and, secondly, it gives rise to more new problems and doubts than we can answer. We will not evade a discussion of them, even though we cannot expect it to lead us to clear understanding.

First, then: in normal grief too the loss of the object is undoubtedly surmounted, and this process too absorbs all the energies of the ego while it lasts. Why then does it not set up the economic condition for a phase of triumph after it has run its course or at least produce some slight indication of such a state? I find it impossible to answer this objection off-hand. It reminds us again that we do not even know by what economic measures the work of mourning is carried through; possibly, however, a conjecture may help us here. Reality passes its verdict—that the object no longer exists—upon each single one of the memories and hopes through which the libido was attached to the lost object, and the ego, confronted as it were with the decision whether it will share this fate, is persuaded by the sum of its narcissistic satisfactions in being alive to sever its attachment to the non-existent object. We may imagine that, because of the slowness and the gradual way in which this severance is achieved, the expenditure of energy necessary for it becomes somehow dissipated by the time the task is carried through.¹

It is tempting to essay a formulation of the work

¹ The economic point of view has up till now received little attention in psycho-analytic researches. I would mention as an exception a paper by Viktor Tausk, 'Compensation as a Means of Discounting the Motive of Repression', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol. v. (*Zeitschrift*, Bd. I., 1913.)

performed during melancholia on the lines of this conjecture concerning the work of mourning. Here we are met at the outset by an uncertainty. So far we have hardly considered the topographical situation in melancholia, nor put the question in what systems or between what systems in the mind the work of melancholia goes on. How much of the mental processes of the disease is still occupied with the unconscious object-cathexes that have been given up and how much with their substitute, by identification, in the ego?

Now, it is easy to say and to write that 'the unconscious (thing-)presentation of the object has been abandoned by the libido'. In reality, however, this presentation is made up of innumerable single impressions (unconscious traces of them), so that this withdrawal of libido is not a process that can be accomplished in a moment, but must certainly be, like grief, one in which progress is slow and gradual. Whether it begins simultaneously at several points or follows some sort of definite sequence is not at all easy to decide; in analyses it often becomes evident that first one, then another memory is activated and that the laments which are perpetually the same and wearisome in their monotony nevertheless each time take their rise in some different unconscious source. If the object had not this great significance, strengthened by a thousand links, to the ego, the loss of it would be no meet cause for either mourning or melancholia. This character of withdrawing the libido bit by bit is therefore to be ascribed alike to mourning and to melancholia; it is probably sustained by the same economic arrangements and serves the same purposes in both.

As we have seen, however, there is more in the content of melancholia than in that of normal grief. In melancholia the relation to the object is no simple one; it is complicated by the conflict of ambivalence. This latter is either constitutional, *i.e.* it is an element of every love-relation formed by this particular ego, or else it proceeds from precisely those experiences that

involved a threat of losing the object. For this reason the exciting causes of melancholia are of a much wider range than those of grief, which is for the most part occasioned only by a real loss of the object, by its death. In melancholia, that is, countless single conflicts in which love and hate wrestle together are fought for the object; the one seeks to detach the libido from the object, the other to uphold this libidoposition against assault. These single conflicts cannot be located in any system but the Ucs, the region of memory-traces of things (as contrasted with word-cathexes). The efforts to detach the libido are made in this system also during mourning; but in the latter nothing hinders these processes from proceeding in the normal way through the Pcs to consciousness. For the work of melancholia this way is blocked, owing perhaps to a number of causes or to their combined operation. Constitutional ambivalence belongs by nature to what is repressed, while traumatic experiences with the object may have stirred to activity something else that has been repressed. Thus everything to do with these conflicts of ambivalence remains excluded from consciousness, until the outcome characteristic of melancholia sets in. This, as we know, consists in the libidinal cathexis that is being menaced at last abandoning the object, only, however, to resume its occupation of that place in the ego whence it came. So by taking flight into the ego love escapes annihilation. After this regression of the libido the process can become conscious; it appears in consciousness as a conflict between one part of the ego and its self-criticizing faculty.

That which consciousness is aware of in the work of melancholia is thus not the essential part of it, nor is it even the part which we may credit with an influence in bringing the suffering to an end. We see that the ego debases itself and rages against itself, and as little as the patient do we understand what this can lead to and how it can change. We can more readily

credit such an achievement to the unconscious part of the work, because it is not difficult to perceive an essential analogy between the work performed in melancholia and in mourning. Just as the work of grief, by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego the benefit of continuing to live, impels the ego to give up the object, so each single conflict of ambivalence, by disparaging the object, denigrating it, even as it were by slaying it, loosens the fixation of the libido to it. It is possible, therefore, for the process in the Ucs to come to an end, whether it be that the fury has spent itself or that the object is abandoned as no longer of value. We cannot tell which of these two possibilities is the regular or more usual one in bringing melancholia to an end, nor what influence this termination has on the future condition of the case. The ego may enjoy here the satisfaction of acknowledging itself as the better of the two, as superior to the object.

Even if we accept this view of the work of melancholia, it still does not supply an explanation of the one point upon which we hoped for light. By analogy with various other situations we expected to discover in the ambivalence prevailing in melancholia the economic condition for the appearance of mania when the melancholia has run its course. But there is one fact to which our expectations must bow. Of the three conditioning factors in melancholia—loss of the object, ambivalence, and regression of libido into the ego—the first two are found also in the obsessional reproaches arising after the death of loved persons. In these it is indubitably the ambivalence that motivates the conflict, and observation shows that after it has run its course nothing in the nature of a triumph or a manic state of mind is left. We are thus directed to the third factor as the only one that can have this effect. That accumulation of cathexis which is first of all 'bound' and then, after termination of the work of melancholia, becomes free and makes mania possible must be connected with the regression of the libido

into narcissism. The conflict in the ego, which in melancholia is substituted for the struggle surging round the object, must act like a painful wound which calls out unusually strong anti-cathexes. Here again, however, it will be well to call a halt and postpone further investigations into mania until we have gained some insight into the economic conditions, first, of bodily pain, and then of the mental pain¹ which is its analogue. For we know already that, owing to the interdependence of the complicated problems of the mind, we are forced to break off every investigation at some point until such time as the results of another attempt elsewhere can come to its aid.²

¹ [Schmerz.]

² *Additional Note, 1924.* Cf. the continued discussion of this problem in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.*